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Letter, 1973 May 20, from Jester J. Hairston to Eva Jessye

Jester J. Hairston

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May 20, 1973

My Darling:

Thank you so much for your lovely letter and the interesting poems you unearthed. You are really an inspiration, Miss Jeaaye and I love you more and more each time your name comes to my mind. Keep up your good work and no man can a-hinder you, Girl.

The notice the Ann Harbor News gave you was so rewarding. And Marge was just crazy about the Mother's Day poem. I'm going to learn it and recite it. I try to learn significant poems to recite to the kids when I get tired, during our rehearsals. I tell them stories of my past life and my struggles and they always seem so interested. Very few people recite poetry these days. So they think I am doing something new. When what I'm really doing is resting myself between songs. For some reason or other I just cannot work slowly. I use so much energy during my rehearsals, but I love my work so very much that I never seem to get tired. And, of course, I exercise a lot each day. I try to walk two miles each day and or do 40 squats in the morning, in my livingroom. It's good for my knees. Sometimes I walk and squat both on the same day. Then I rub my knees and legs with absorbine Jr. Marge calls it "Old peoples' Perfume". But I'm much more agile than she and I'm almost 11 years her senior, too.

I do a lot of praying now a-days, Miss Jessye, because I am so deeply grateful to God for all He has done and is doing for me, as I grow older. He keeps me at top peak, healthwise and that is wonderful indeed! And He has given me a good musical education and has put so many opportunities in my way. I wish you could be in attendance at some of my rehearsals and performances, Miss Jessye. This coming June 9, I am conducting one of the snntiest Choraes in the San Francisco district; the Schola Cantorum, which does all the long-hair works for the San Francisco Symphony orchestra. Their own conductor will conduct the first part of the program and I shall do the last half, all my songs. They are such good musicians that it would frighten me to death if I had met them years ago.

Marge is well and sends love to you. I wish you all the success in the world on your New York venture. On that day I shall be conducting a Church of The Nazarene choir in a concert at their church, in Long Beach. Otherwise I'd be there, sharing your triumph with you, Baby. But you'll do OK, because our prayers will be with you and all the others who have come through that wonderful opera. Give them all my regard and best wishes. I shall send them a telegram for the occasion and I think you for telling me about it. God bless you throughout the rest of your precious life. I love you.

Jeanston